

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 AID-05 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 TRSE-00
OMB-01 SSM-03 /082 W
-----050152Z 127935 /73

R 041356Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3910
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2106

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, LE, PLO
SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN REFUGEES AT DAMOUR

1. THERE HAS BEEN GOOD DEAL OF REPORTING IN LECAL
PRESS REGARDING GOL PROJECT FOR MOVEMENT OF PALESTINIANS
FROM FORMERLY CHRISTIAN VILLAGE OF DAMOUR, JUST SOUTH
OF BEIRUT, TO NEW CAMP TO BE SET UP AT BISSARIYAH, SOUTH
OF SIDON (BEIRUT 2032). DISCUSSED SUBJECT WITH UNRWA
COMMISSIONER GENERAL MCELHINEY MAY 2 AND HE MADE
FOLLOWING COMMENTS OF INTEREST.

2. BISSARIYAH SITE IF JIFTLIK, OR STATE, LAND. IT IS
HILLY AND UNSUITABLE AS IS FOR EMPLACEMENT OF CAMP.
LEVELING, PLUS NATURE OF HOUSING PLO WANTS TO HAVE
ERECTED, MEANS TOTAL COST LIKELY BE SOMETHING LIKE
\$25 MILLION, WHEREAS GOL THINKING IN TERMS \$10 MILLION.
MORE LAND WILL ALSO BE NEEDED. AT COMPUTATION OF
100 SQUARE METERS PER FAMILY, SOME 400,000 SQUARE METERS
WILL BE NEEDED TO ACCOMMODATE 4,000 FAMILIES WHOSE
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EVACUATION FROM DAMOUR IS PROPOSED. SITE ONLY ABOUT
HALF THAT SIZE. UNRWA TRYING TO CONVINCE GOL CHEAPEST
SOLUTION WOULD BE TO BUY MORE SUITABLE SITE TO AVOID
PROBLEM OF LEVELING.

3. FINANCING: GOL APPARENTLY PLANNING LEND PLO
\$10 MILLION FROM SAUDI OR KUWAIT DONATIONS TO FINANCE

MOVE. AS NOTED EARLIER, THIS SUM INADEQUATE FOR STRUCTURES PLANNED ON SITE IN QUESTION. UNRWA HAS BUDGETED \$11 MILLION FOR ITS CONTRIBUTION, BUT MCELHINEY WILL NOT APPROVE ACTUAL EXPENDITURE UNLESS HE GETS SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THAT MUCH FROM SAUDIS. MCELHINEY ENCOURAGED TO BELIEVE SAUDIS WILL GIVE THAT MUCH AND MORE.

4. IN MEANTIME, MCELHINEY QUESTIONS HOW MANY PALESTINIANS WILL ACTUALLY BE WILLING LEAVE DAMOUR. POL HAS GIVEN COMMITMENT TO GOL IN THIS RESPECT, BUT ENFORCEMENT WILL NOT BE EASY. HE NOTES IN PASSING ONLY HALF OF BUILDINGS IN TOWN ARE CURRENTLY OCCUPIED.

5. WE DOUBT VERY MUCH THAT 900 TENTS ARE NOW IN PLACE AT BISSARIYAH AS ALLEGED BY PRESS. SUSPECT THAT NONE HAS IN FACT BEEN ERECTED BECAUSE SITE HAS NOT YET BEEN LEVELED AND PREPARED. MINISTER OF SOCIAL WELFARE HAS STILL NOT MADE UP HIS MIND WHETHER TO BUY THE 500 TENTS WE HAVE OFFERED. HE HAS NOTED THAT INDIAN TENTS ARE MUCH CHEAPER AND HAS ASKED FOR SAMPLE SO HE CAN DETERMINE IF QUALITY UP TO REQUIREMENTS. PARKER

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